

# **Entrusted with your Children**

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**Ephesians 6:4**  
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So when I became the pastor of what is now Redeemer Bible Church in 2015, I sat down with a pad of paper and I wrote down a list of things that I hope happen here. There are a lot of things on that piece of paper. A lot of it is stuff that you're already seeing here. There is one thing on that list though that still drives me to this day, one thing that hasn't happened here yet, and I'm not going to rest until it does. You see, our world has lost its mind when it comes to family. It's become hostile, judgmental, vindictive, and even filled with hate against the Christian view of family. When the reality is the Christian view of family leads to joy and satisfaction, it leads to flourishing and fulfillment. Why? Because we're living the way that God designed us to live.

So as the world comes apart and as the coordinated efforts of Marxists to destruct, deconstruct, and destroy the family as it leads to untold amounts of pain and confusion and disillusionment, discouragement and depression, mutilation and even death, as all of that is happening, my hope is that God raises up here and all over the world, Christian countercultures that do family and do manhood and womanhood and marriage and parenting God's way, and then shows the world, not that we are better because we are not better, but shows them God's way is better than theirs.

I believe that part of helping lost people come to know Christ and salvation happens through lives, through men and women, moms and dads, children and families and marriages that are joyful and thriving and flourishing. Then when the non-believing world asks us, why is your life better? Why do your kids listen to you? Why does your marriage seem to be filled with so much joy and happiness? You just point to Jesus, and Titus 2:10 says that "Your lives, our lives as Christians can adorn, can make Jesus more appealing to people so they come to him and are saved." So what I'm hoping for and working for here is that one day soon when someone confides in a friend or a family member that they need help because they need to... they want to know what it means to be a godly man or a godly woman, or help with family or marriage or parenting, that the response is, oh, you need to go to redeemer.

People see results and all of that stuff at that church, they're committed to that, you need to go there. And that can start as all of us in our lives embrace this concept of stewardship. When we realize that nothing in our lives belongs to us, it all belongs to God, when we realize that because it belongs to him, he can tell us what to do with his stuff and he will hold us accountable for how we managed it. When we realize that, embrace that, our lives actually thrive. You see, after Jesus saves you from the punishment you deserve for your sin, he sets you free to then live your life for him instead of self, following his Word as an act of love for saving you. So it's salvation first, and then growth in salvation after, and growth in salvation in response that that's the context for every instruction on how to follow Jesus after you've been saved.

It's always from the truth of the gospel, from his love for you. We stand amazed at God's grace in saving us and because he saves us, we get to work doing the things that please him in response to his kindness in saving us. And that's stewardship after salvation being entrusted with someone else's property to care for it as they see fit and about which the steward will be held accountable. It's a lot like babysitting. The babysitter is entrusted with someone else's kids to care for those kids as the babysitter sees fit. No? No, as the parents see fit, and then the babysitter is held accountable for how they cared for those kids, either reprimanded or rewarded. Last week, I talked about the stewardship of family, that husbands, God has entrusted your wife to you, and wives, God has entrusted your husbands to you. The stewardship of your marriage will last as long as you both shall live or until Christ returns.

And while seeing Jesus face to face is going to be a wonderful day, the best day ever possible. We'll also, in that day, be held accountable for things like our marriages. Did we faithfully do what he told us as husbands or as wives to do in his word with our families? And listen, it's never too late to get started on that, by the way. Better to repent after 30 or 40 or 50 years of not doing things God's way than to stand before Jesus knowing you should have lived his way but didn't after hearing what he wanted in his Word. This past week, I realized that last week's message on family stewardship was incomplete without also talking about the fact that you've been entrusted with your children, that the stewardship of family in the biggest picture is two things. It is your marriage and it is your kids.

The Bible says, Psalm 127:3, that "Children are a heritage from the Lord. They came to your life from the Lord. They did not exist before they were created. He created them in their mother's womb when he gave them to you." So in a very real sense, our kids are our kids. We're responsible for them and our kids belong to God and he gave them to us. God, in Ezekiel 18:4, couldn't be clear on this, when God says, quote, "Behold all souls are mine, the souls of the Father, as well as the soul of the son is mine." So as their owner, God has entrusted our kids to us to parent them as he says in his Word, and about that parenting, we will give an account.

Now, I know in saying that I'm talking to a room full of people, many who have children, but many who don't. So if that's you, you need this message because you may have kids one day, and because you know people who have kids who you could really be a blessing to with the truth that you'll hear today. I also know I'm talking to people who have kids but they're all grown. So your parenting might be over but listen, passing on your knowledge of God's Word, that is never done. And grandparents, don't worry, I have something for you too, but I'm going to save that to the end.

One last group, kids in the room, this text, Ephesians 6:4, is what you should want your parents to do for you. You should ask them to Ephesians 6:4 you. Now, with marriage last week, and parenting this week, I'm promising, I'm not trying to drown you in guilt and shame, I promise. As we go through this, guilt and shame are what you experience. Preach the gospel to yourself. Remind yourself of Jesus, remind yourself of sins forgiven, remind yourself of his grace, and then allow that conviction to do its work, which is then to own it, and then to move forward in

spite of it in God's grace and forgiveness. Now, the stewardship of our kids, that could be a yearlong series, and since we're not going to do that. The pastors recommended their favorite books on parenting on the back of the handout in your program.

So I put a little star by the one where you should start, if you're like, I don't know where to start, start with that one. So today is going to be more of a what to do kind of message, and these books in the back have a lot of the how to do it in those books. Also, my friends in California do a parenting course called Training Hearts for Jesus, which is excellent and good news. They're starting another class this week. It's an online course that you do with your spouse that is video linked to the teachers and to parents who are taking the course with you all over the country. So I put the website on the back of the handout, if you're interested, it's [traininghearts.org](http://traininghearts.org), or [traininghearts4jesus.org](http://traininghearts4jesus.org), and if you're interested, you can email us, [info@redeemeraz.org](mailto:info@redeemeraz.org), or put your name, email, and the parenting class on a connect card and drop it in one of the giving boxes as you leave today, we'll email you anything that you might need.

Now, let's set the stage for the stewardship of our kids. Ephesians 6, the context of Ephesians 6:4 goes all the way back to chapter 4:18, where it says this, "Do not get drunk but be filled with the spirit." What that means is just like being drunk is being controlled by alcohol, or being filled with anger is to be controlled by anger. So being filled with the spirit is being controlled by God Himself, the Holy Spirit inside of you. I believe this is twofold. So first being filled or controlled by the Spirit is to be faithful, obedient to the Bible since the Holy Spirit is the divine author of the Bible, and second being filled with the Spirit is being influenced by his leadership, his guidance in your life. What do I mean by that?

I don't mean listening for a still small voice. I don't mean waiting for an audible voice or some tingling in your tummy. What this means is this, in the same way that sin tries to lead you into temptation, so the Spirit leads you through his influence, his impulse. Pastor Kyle last night called it his nudging to do what's right. Galatians 5:17 calls this the desires of the spirit. This is not the desires that he has for you, these are the desires that come from him for... his desires become yours. Those desires are objective, that is they're stated clearly in the Bible, and his desires are subjective, like a force in you. And as you give into that force, the result is you obey, you follow his leadership. You do what the Spirit wants you to do. That's why I often pray something like give us the courage, give us the determination to do what we already know you want us to do.

See, the Spirit is already pointing you to the specific application of his Word that he wants you to make. I'm convinced he does that every weekend. And I know the Reformed Bible Church world freaks out at this kind of talk. It sounds charismatic or touchy-feely or mystical, but this is the internal dynamic between the believer and the Holy Spirit as described in Galatians 5:16-18. You can listen to my sermon on that text. I go much deeper into all of this. It's on our website or YouTube page. I say all that to say, "Paul gives the command to be filled with or controlled by the Spirit," in 5:18, and then from 5:19 all the way to 6-9, He's saying, "This is what it looks like to be controlled by the Spirit in the various spheres of relationship that you might have." And the

one we're looking at today is what Spirit-controlled Spirit-filled parents. This is how they raise their kids.

So Spirit-filled parent, does Ephesians 6:4, fathers do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. So the Spirit-filled home has parents relating to their kids in the ways that Ephesians 6:4 says that we should. Now, look at the text. I know I said parents but who is the text addressed to? Thank you for that, fathers, not parents. See, verse 4 is an intentional shift from too fathers, from parents in verses 1-3. And you see this in that Paul uses a different word. In chapter 6:1, it says parents. Chapter 6:4 says fathers, he's zooming in. Now, that doesn't mean, moms, that you can just go ahead and provoke your kids all you want, just like, provoke them all day every day, it doesn't even matter, and you shouldn't give two thoughts about bringing your kids up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. You don't need to worry about that.

No. It means that while both moms and dads will be held accountable for their kids, dads are ultimately responsible for making sure Ephesians 6:4 happens in their homes. So dads, ultimately, responsible and wives helping out with that responsibility, as we saw last week. Faithful family stewardship begins when you, ***point #1), Take Responsibility for Your Family, Take Responsibility for Your Family.*** Knowing that God's will hold dad responsible for the direction and the dedication of our family to his will, and that he will hold wives responsible for helping dads do that. Being faithful family stewards of our kids starts with taking responsibility for them.

So it's rejecting laziness, rejecting apathy, rejecting the false spirituality, you might've come across out there, or maybe even said to yourself, God, your sovereign, so whatever my family becomes, I mean, that's on you. It's your fault. I'm just going to coast while you make my family what you want it to be. No, it's just the opposite of that. It's because God is sovereign and as the sovereign, he has authority over all things, including our kids, that he's very graciously given us an owner's manual for how to manage our marriages and our children in his Word.

So it's embracing the fact that if our families are going to be what God wants them to be, it is on us to move our families in that direction, as we follow the leadership of the spirit in our lives and in his Word. This responsibility is seen in the text because there are two commands, do not provoke and bring them up. So these are to dictate the lifestyle, the ongoing interaction we're to have with our kids and that wives who encourage their husbands in and to help them be successful in. So dads, we're to be the GPS that sets the direction that our families go. We're the thermostats that determine the spiritual temperature in our homes. So unless you have a wife that fights you on this or she's just a spiritual giant compared to you, which is a whole nether issue, if that's the case, the spiritual temperature of our homes, dads, is the result of us being in those homes.

So have you taken responsibility for your children, for their upbringing, for how they're raised in light of what God wants for them, or have you bought the lie that, listen, I provide for the family, and she raises the kids? Dads, you're right, it is your job to provide for your family. It's your job

to protect your family and it's your job to raise the kids. The day-to-day, that may be on your wife but the direction of your family, their commitment to Christ, the parenting, the decisions, the outcome of your kids, dads, that is all on us.

So if you've been negligent in this, today is a good day to confess it to the Lord, maybe even confess it to your wife and kids, especially if you made work an excuse to check out and force your wife to lead in this area. See, dads, not only is this what God expects from us, but dads, he's given us a superpower to pull this off. Redeemer has a short video on our IG page, our Instagram page with over a million views where I interviewed a professor named Nancy Pearcey about her book, *The Toxic War on Masculinity*. Anybody seen this?

She recounts a thirty-five-year long-term study done on the impact that parents have on the spiritual commitment of their children, and what they found is incredible. The first thing that they found after thirty-five years is that when it comes to the spiritual commitment of their children, fathers matter more than mothers. It doesn't mean that mothers don't matter at all, it means that fathers matter way more than their mothers, is what they found, which means that they obviously matter more than teachers and youth pastors and youth groups and all of that, that if dads are committed Christians, their kids are far more likely to also be committed Christians than if it is just mom who is the committed Christian and not dad. Second, after thirty-five years, they found that what matters most for kids remaining Christian is not just the dads are committed Christians, but it's also dads who have a warm, affectionate connection with their children.

You see, dads, whether we like it or not, recognize it or embrace it or not, you have the most powerful influence on the commitment your kids are going to have for Jesus. It is more powerful than anyone else on the planet. It doesn't mean the kids won't walk away. As many of you know, who did everything right, who have little to no regrets about parenting your children as Christians and yet they still walked away. You led the proverbial horse to water and that's all you can do. It is up to them to take a drink. And I know, even bringing that up can be, again, source of guilt and shame and pain and a discouragement that tells you to give up. But don't. I know you know that, but don't. Keep praying. Keep pointing them to Christ. Keep loving them. See, your obvious love for Jesus and your obvious love for them is a superpower when it comes to their commitment to Jesus lasting long-term.

So when you prioritize church and you read your Bible, when you are living distinctly Christian in your decision-making and your convictions, all of that is showing your kids just how important Jesus is. You couple that with kids being absolutely convinced that you love them, that's the secret sauce. That's the superpower. Dads, we can start unleashing that superpower in our families when we don't check out, when we dig into the truth and take responsibility for our families. And this is fascinating, that thirty-five-yearlong study just simply found exactly what this text already says. Look at it again, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." Dad, we work against God's work in the life of our kids when instead of loving our kids dearly like I just talked about, we instead, verse 4, "Provoke our children to anger."

This isn't a once-in-a-while thing, or it doesn't mean that you broke this command every time your kid gets mad at you. This is talking about our normal everyday interaction with our kids. For this to be true of us, anger is the usual result of our interaction with them. It's being with us that keeps making them bitter and resentful, irritated, frustrated, not because we correct their rebellion, but because of how we do it, in ways that are harsh or frightening, unfair or unreasonable, ways that are humiliating or inconsistent or indifferent to the child or indifferent to the situation or God forbid, just plain abusive. God emphasizes not doing this in Colossians 3:21 which says, "Do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged, lest we break their spirit, lest we cause them to become depressed and hopeless, disheartened." In contrast to all of that, notice verse 4, it uses the word, bring them up.

This is a command, it's more than just, hey, raise them, or look after them. This word is the same word translated in chapter 5:29, nourish. This word means to care for. It means to nurture. So based on this word and based on the contrast between that word and the first part of the verse, not provoking our kids to anger, you can see that faithful stewardship of children happens when you seek to, *point #2), Treat Your Children Tenderly, Treat Your Children Tenderly*. Dads and moms too are normal everyday interaction with our kids in times of fun and in times of discipline, all of that is meant to nurture them. It's the way you treat the new growth of a brand-new little plant, tenderly, delicately, sensitively. There's a kindness there, a patience there that's in this word that should mark how we give them everything that they need to be the men and women that God designed them to be, and one day, hopefully, prayerfully, the men and women that God will save them to be. The idea here is that parenting is not like training a dog or breaking a colt.

You're caring for them, and the idea here is that care, that concern, it lasts into adulthood. Going back to Ephesians 5:29, the text says, "Husbands are to nourish our wives like we nourish our bodies." And that same word is translated, bring up, in chapter 6:4, "To actively nurture them, cultivate them, develop them." That's where I'm getting this idea of tender treatment from. To nurture them is to be close to them, to know them, to love them. They don't question all of that because they know you don't just care about them, but you care for them, nurturing them, encouraging them, loving them. Well, by using the same word, I think we can learn about how God wants parents to treat our kids by considering how we treat our bodies.

I mean, unless we're just crazy, we nourish our bodies. We're just insane. We nourish our bodies, we nurture it, we care for it. If you think about it, we're aware of our bodies. We know that our bodies are there. I know my hands go crazy every time I talk. I'm aware of that. You might not think I am, but I'm aware of that. We're also sensitive to our bodies, the feelings, the needs, the activities. We know what's going on and we're sensitive to that. We're also attentive to the needs of our bodies. We respond to our bodies to meet the needs that it has based on what our bodies are communicating to us through pain or desires or feelings. So we're aware of our body sensitive to and attentive to our bodies. Let's take that idea and then apply it to our kids.

Are we aware of our kids? Are they just out of sight and out of mind, disconnected from us most of the time because they're plugged in, raised by electronics? Do we know them? Do we know the uniqueness of each one? Do we know facts about them? Do we know what they like and dislike? Do we know what they love and can't stand? Do we know their friends? Do we know the influence of those friends? Do we know the influence of the friends that come into our homes through electronics? Do we know if they're born again or if they still need to believe in Jesus? Are we sensitive to their needs? Do we know what they need from us? Are we sensitive to how God made them, specifically? Do we notice how they're doing and treat them accordingly? Do we act or react to them in ways that are sensitive to the fact that they still need to be saved or that they already are saved? Are we attentive to their needs?

Do we respond to what we're seeing in them? Are we just coasting, checked out, maybe even oblivious to it all? Did you know that after the female lays a single egg, the male emperor penguin holds the egg on its feet and keeps it off the ice and takes his belly and covers the egg in order to keep it warm? And he does that for over two months, doesn't even eat during that time. He sacrifices what is best for him to tenderly care for his offspring. Do you know that the male seahorse carries the female's eggs in a pouch in his stomach, fertilized eggs, and he holds them there for two to four weeks? And as the babies are hatching and growing inside of this pouch, he regulates how salty the water is in that pouch as one of the many ways that he's getting these baby seahorses ready to live their lives in the ocean.

Dads, we can learn something, can't we, about nurturing our kids with tenderness from the penguin and the seahorse? But parents, we can learn a lot when we look at God, and we ask this question, how does God the Father treat me? That's how I should treat my kids. And in general, God treats us very tenderly, doesn't he? He's aware of us. He's sensitive to us. He's attentive to what we need, and whether it's blessing or discipline, his interaction with us is never ever divorced from his love for us. In fact, I think, I'm convinced God is saying, I love you to each of us all day, every day, all the time, and he never stops. Your brain firing is God loving you. Your eyes working is God loving you. Your job, your family, the blessings in your life, all of it is God loving you.

And since I'm convinced that God the Father is saying, I love you all the time, I want my kids to know that I love them and that all my interaction in the good times and the bad is never divorced from my love for them. I was telling my kids about this the other day. I had my three oldest in the car, we're driving down Sossaman, I'm trying to help them understand why mom and dad have rules. And I said to them, "Hey, you guys just need to know nobody loves you more than Mom and Dad." And inevitably, one of them, usually, my five-year-old, Emma, will say, "Well, what about Jesus?"

That's nice, pastor getting corrected theologically by their five-year-old. That's great. They say yes, other than Jesus, no one loves you more than mom and dad. And then I said, "And so you should remember that when we tell you this is what we want from you, it is always and only coming from a place of deep love for you, right, kids?" "Yes, Dad." Why? Because everything

God wants for you comes from his never-ending love for you. Now, this tender cultivation of our children in love is accomplished through the spiritual education of our children. Look back at the text, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." So dads, we're primarily responsible to bring our kids up to nurture them. Mom, you're primarily responsible for helping to make that a reality. And now, how do we do that as Christian parents?

Verse 4, we nurture them, how? By the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Those last three words of the Lord are critical because they make what is being said here distinctly Christian. This is the Christian nurture of children versus the world's nurture of children. And in fact, both Christians and the world, non-Christians, they nurture kids in the same exact way, through discipline and instruction. This is what's true. This is what's false. This is what gets rewarded. This is what gets rebuked. It's the same thing. The how is the same thing. The difference is the content of the nurturing. The difference is the standard for the nurture. The difference is the goal of the nurturing. Either it is of the Lord or usually, it's against the Lord. Now, the first word, discipline, refers to training, instruction, or education. The second word, instruction, refers to warning, or correction, adjusting, improving.

So the tender nurture we talked about in verse 2 is accomplished by both educating our kids in the truth, as well as second, correcting our kids to conform their lives and conform their thinking to the truth, and to do that in ways that don't regularly provoke them to anger. So fathers, primarily, parents in general, we're being shown here that faithful family stewardship happens as you, *point #3*), ***Train Your Children Extensively, Train Your Children Extensively***, extensively as in training them in the truth and training them with the truth, helping them conform their thinking and their activity to God's Word and correcting their thinking and correcting their actions to realign their thinking and realign their actions to God's Word.

This is what it means to train your children and to do it extensively. This is Deuteronomy 6:6 which says, quote, "These words that I command you today, God speaking, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children." So we're told here in Ephesians 6 and Deuteronomy 6 to train our children, to nurture them in the truth. And then Deuteronomy 6 also told us how to do that, which is diligently, to take it seriously, to engage, to be involved, not be lazy or slothful, but determined. Then the text describes what that diligence looks like. Listen, "You shall talk about God's truth when you sit down in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise." To mom and dads, it's the instruction of our children all the time, when we're hanging out at home, when we're out and about with them. Last thing of the day, first thing of the day.

Now, listen, if you just heard all of that and you thought, I don't know how to do that, I don't know what the Bible says enough to be able to do that. I don't know what my kids need to know about in the Bible. I need help with that. Two things, number one, this is what pastors are for. We are not perfect parents, far from it, but we know some stuff and we're striving to do this in



our lives, or we have pastors who are already pastors who can tell you, yeah, this was great, and this wasn't great.

Also, I put books on the back of your handout. Now, some of you are proud that you have not read a book since high school, but listen, that's not good, that's not good. They have books now that actually read to you. You know that? It's crazy. The books read to you. So there's no excuse. Get one of these books, read it, get another one, read it. Take this course that I talked about before. Why? So that three months from now or six months from now, a year from now, you and me, we aren't in the same place when it comes to the kids entrusted to our care, and do it so that one day, you put the work in now like a farmer, you plant the seeds and you water, you nurture it, one day those seeds grow and you see the fruit of your tender treatment and the fruit of your extensive training in their lives.

And you'll see it, not just in their lives, but in the generations after them as they do the same things for their kids, because you, Ephesians 6:4'd your kids today. And what happens if we don't? Let's just think about that for a minute. There are some bad parenting examples in the Bible and there are a lot of them. What happens if we don't take the stewardship of our kids all that seriously? Well, think about Abraham. Abraham had mainly two sons. Let's think about the first one, Ishmael. Remember what Abraham did to Ishmael? He abandoned him. He abandoned Ishmael and his mother, Hagar, and the result has been anger, hatred, and war between the descendants of Abraham ever since.

Think about Jacob and Joseph. Joseph is Jacob's favorite son compared to the other 11. And it was that favoritism with Joseph that led to such deep-seated resentment that his 11 sons capture Joseph, sell him into slavery, tell their dad that he's dead. Why? So that he would love them as much as he loved Joseph. Think about Eli and his two sons. This is 1 Samuel 3, he seems to have idolized them, letting them do whatever they wanted instead of what God wanted. And this lenience led them to become blasphemers and caused others in Israel to blaspheme because of them, because they were priests being horrible, which then leads to their eventual death. Think about King David and his son, Absalom. David allows a wicked injustice to be committed by one of his sons against one of his daughters, Absalom's sister, because David doesn't address the evil appropriate led to Absalom killing his brother and attempting a coup on his father's kingdom.

Think about King Solomon and his son Rehoboam. This is 1 Kings 12. You see the book of Proverbs is a collection of Solomon's wisdom and all of that wisdom was for his son, Rehoboam. You can see it in there, he talks to his son throughout that whole thing. Why? Because he wants his son to be a good king, to be a wise king, not a foolish king. Then the argument can be made that Solomon's sin-filled life is what impacted his son more than his wisdom, so that when Rehoboam becomes king, he destroys the kingdom that Solomon had given him, because he's foolish.

Think about the kings of Israel thereafter and their sons. Over and over again, when you read about them, in Kings and in Chronicles, over and over again, you see that whenever a son became king, the Bible says they just followed the sinful example of their ancestors, which

further spread rebellion and idolatry. Think about Herodias and her daughter. You remember them? Herodias, with her ungodly influence on her daughter led to the murder of John the Baptist. Remember that? King says to the daughter, "What do you want?" "I want the head of John the Baptist on a platter." This is not good parenting. It's not.

Parents, we have to nurture the kids entrusted to our care, and we do that by instructing them in the truth and correcting them when they get out of line with the truth. What I mean by that is that the Bible is the standard. It's the owner's manual and that when they get out of line with the scriptures in how they're thinking or how they're acting, we help them get back in line through correction. You do this, by the way, when they're not Christians. Why? Because Christianity is the truth. It's the way the world is, and because of that, you're nurturing them to live in God's world with the hope that and the prayers that you pointing them to what God wants through their lives and them continually failing at that causes them to what? Cry out to Christ, because they recognize they need a savior, because they recognize their sin.

I don't want to force my religion on my kids. I just want them to decide for themselves, that is so anti-Ephesians 6:4. Why? Because religion isn't like ice cream flavors. You just pick the one you like. It doesn't really matter. No, religion is like math problems, there are right or wrong answers, and Jesus is the right answer. He is the truth. And so when you disciple them in the things we're talking about today, you are nurturing them in the truth. And if you think doing this is just going to push them away from Christ and push them away from you, listen, it will, if verse 4, your regular interaction with them provokes them to anger.

But we saw from that study and now we've seen in the text, it won't push them away, if you treat your kids the way that God treats you, if you nurture them in the truth with tenderness and warmth and compassion and a heavy dose of affection. So these three points set the course for what faithful family stewards do with the children entrusted to their care, the how to do that. That should be worked out with husbands and wives as they study the Bible and read books and get training and have conversations with each other and have conversations with people that are really doing this well as they pray together and they try things out that don't work and they try out more things that do work.

All these moms and dads are filled with God's Spirit. So kids, ask mommy and daddy, please do Ephesians 6:4 for me. It will show you that your mom and dad love you dearly when they do. To the not-yet-parents, living Ephesians 6:4 is what you need to prepare for. New parents, living Ephesians 6:4 is what you should already be preparing for if you haven't already. Longtime parents, if living Ephesians 6:4 is a new idea for you, or if it's been in the back of your mind but you haven't really taken it seriously, I hope that a message like this is an encouragement to do what you already know the Spirit wants you to do. Finished parents, praise God if you took this seriously, but if you didn't, today felt like a bunch of guilt and shame for what you should have done, listen, confess whatever it is that's making you feel guilty to the Lord is sin if it is, and then walk in the freedom of the forgiveness that he offers.

And a special word to grandparents, remember I told you I'd come back to you, your job is to support these truths and to never be a hindrance to these truths in the lives of your kids and your grandkids. You have an incredible opportunity with your grandkids to have a real and lasting heritage in their lives with your godly life, your godly advice, and your godly example, which I know many of you grandparents are already seeking to have. Now, I know putting last week together with this week can be quite daunting. That's a lot of stewardship of family. But listen, taking the stewardship of your kids seriously, I promise, it will be worth it.

They may not be doing it now and it may just be the opposite, is what they're doing now, but one day, for taking this seriously, you'll hear well done from the Lord, and maybe one day, your kid will say that they were actually blessed because they had a mom like you, or they had a dad like you, or they had both like you, who not only pointed them to Christ but loved them with all your heart. This is the hope when we put family stewardship into practice in our lives.

Let's pray. Jesus, as I said just a minute ago, I'm convinced everyone who is a follower of you knows exactly how you want us to respond to this message. It's already been impressed on our minds, it's already been suggested, it's already been pushed, nudged by your Spirit. So my prayer is that you would give us the grace that we need, the courage we need, the determination we need to do what we already know You want us to do. There may be others who this message is really not about parenting, it's about you, and their need to turn from their sin and give their lives to you. I pray that you would use this message in their lives in that way, and all of us one day will stand before you and, on that day, all of the things that we did in our lives will all be seen correctly, they will all be realigned in our minds in that moment to the question, was I faithful? Please use your Word today in all of our lives to get us ready for that day. Amen.